



# KATRINA Daily News

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## Base recovery efforts already showing results

By Tech. Sgt. Dan Neely  
81st Training Wing Public Affairs (deployed)

Personnel here are well into recovery operations less than a week after the base and much of the Gulf Coast sustained massive damage from Hurricane Katrina.

According to base officials, those efforts are making a big difference.

“We’re in the recovery and reconstitution stages, where we’re assessing the damage and repairing the facilities we’re going to need in order to be able to reach out the community and help them recover as well,” said Col. Douglas Hayner, 81st Training Wing vice commander. “We’re evacuating students and non-essential personnel so that we can focus our attention on the operational missions of helping the Gulf Coast recover. We’re already moving toward Phase III, where we’ll bring the equipment and people who have the talent, resources and capability to help the local folks regenerate. A lot of those folks are already here.”

More than 500 medical personnel from the Federal Emergency Management Agency are helping with disease control and recovery from injuries and illnesses. The FBI also dispatched agents to help local law enforcement protect people and assets.

Colonel Hayner also said members of Joint Task Force Katrina have arrived to help orchestrate many of the post-hurricane activities.

“They’re already here on base, set up with their own command centers, and they’ll be fully functional in the next couple of days,” he said.

While the multi-phase recovery effort may take months, even years in some cases, the colonel said Keesler AFB people have already begun helping the local community by supplying their first responders with everything from fuel to clothes.

“We’ve removed a water tower from our own system and connected it to the local community supply, because they’re out of water. And that was completed within the first three days after the hurricane destroyed everything,” the colonel said. “We also got the airfield fully functional for daytime operations. Just 11 hours after hurricane-strength winds left the area, the first airplane actually touched down on the airfield.”

At the Keesler Medical Center, in addition to normal operations, the facility served as one of several hurricane shelters, taking in more than 1,000 personnel and family members. But the going was anything but easy as huge tidal surges eventually flooded its basement where backup generators are housed.



**Cars line up in anticipation of the re-opening of gas pumps at the base service station Friday. Customers are limited to a \$25 gas purchase, which must be pre-paid in cash. Members evacuating the base are given priority over remaining personnel. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Lee Smith)**

“After their primary power failed and the basement flooded, they lost their backup power,” Colonel Hayner said. “They went totally black for the next two days.”

Amazingly, during the complete outage medics performed two operations and delivered two healthy babies – with flashlights as their only source of illumination.

“Two patients were on full-time respirators,” the colonel said. “When the power went out they had generator power. When that went down, they were on three-hour battery packs. So, when those three hours came and went the patients were put on manual respirators. Medics actually took turns breathing for those patients until they finally got small generators up and running and were able to keep their electric-powered equipment functioning. Essentially, there was at least one life saved, possibly two – a total miracle in itself.”

Yet another significant event, Colonel Hayner noted the actions of two civil engineer Airmen who braved Hurricane Katrina’s peak winds to save Keesler’s water system, and in the process ensured an emergency supply for the local community.

“There are so many examples of the heroic efforts displayed by our Airmen during this difficult time,” said Brig. Gen. William Lord, 81st TRW commander. “It makes me extremely proud to see this community come together for the common goal of preserving and restoring our mission and our way of life.”

## KEESLER BASICS:

### General Information

**Food** – Hot meals are now available at the Magnolia Dining Facility from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**AAFES** – A mini Base Exchange is open for business daily from noon to 6 p.m. at the Triangle Mini-Mall, Bldg. 6970. A 10-item purchase limit is in effect (excluding ice purchases). The BX also has generators available for purchase. Additionally, The BX accepts cash, credit and debit cards and personal checks.

**Gasoline** – Gasoline is now available in limited quantities at the AAFES Service Station. Members and their families evacuating the area have priority over personnel remaining on Keesler. There is a \$25 cash limit and must be pre-paid.

**Showers** – Shower facilities are available at the Blake and Dragon fitness centers from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Bring a towel.

**Family Assistance Center** – Family assistance personnel are available at the Levitow Bldg. for emotional support and other issues.

**Pet Information** – The pet shelter will not accept stray pets. Also, pets are not allowed in personnel shelters. Members who have pets in the pet shelter need to ensure their pets are fed and walked regularly.

### Personnel Information

**Assignments** – Outbound personnel PCSing from Keesler AFB with a report no later than date of August through Dec. 31 will be accelerated so they can report early to their next assignment. Assignments will be cancelled or changed for inbound personnel PCSing to Keesler AFB within the next 60 days.

**Food Service** – All able A&A Food Service employees are requested to return to work when safe to do so.

### Claims Information

**Claims Briefings** – The Base Legal Office will provide claims briefings for automobile, personal property and food spoilage, including how to fill out the appropriate paperwork and answer questions today. Briefings for non-prior service students and temporary duty personnel will take place at Wolfe Hall auditorium and the Levitow Building at 10 and 11 a.m. Hourly briefings for all personnel, to include permanent party and dependents will take place at the Levitow Bldg. from noon to 6 p.m. today Friday. Hourly briefings will also take place Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Levitow Bldg. for all personnel.

**USAA** – Representatives from USAA have set up a claims room at the Levitow Bldg. Their hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. They are open to see all personnel and will be here providing services indefinitely. Personnel should contact a representative before visiting to facilitate the claims process. Representatives can be reached by calling toll-free (800) 531-8222.

**GEICO** – A representative from GEICO is available to answer questions at the Levitow Bldg. until further notice.

**Vehicle Damage** – If your vehicle is damaged, do not move it until you talk to your insurance company. Some insurance companies may deny claims if vehicles are moved. For additional information, visit the Base Legal representatives at the Levitow Bldg.

### Finance Information

**Finance** – Limited financial services are available at the Levitow Bldg. from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Customer service hours are 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. To reach a representative for customer service/travel pay related issues call DSN 597-7479. For budget issues, call DSN 597-2770. Contact a finance representative at DSN 597-7256 for additional information.

**Cash Advances** – Up to \$200 is available from the finance office located in the Levitow Bldg. Additionally, Travel pay and pay advances area available to military members and their spouses from other military installations' finance centers.

**Air Force Aid Society** – A limited number of monetary grants for evacuation purposes are available to families in need through the Air Force Aid Society. Single active duty military members from all services may be eligible to receive up to \$250, and military members with families may be eligible to receive up to \$500. Contact your unit first sergeant for application instructions.

### Medical Information

**Emergency Room/Urgent care clinic** – Medical care is now located at the Clinical Research Laboratory. Routine or non-urgent sick call hours are 8-11 a.m. and 3-6 p.m. daily. 24 hour emergency care is also available. Bus service is available for transport to the CRL. Patients who have left the local area can contact the nearest military medical facility or call (800) 444-5455.

**Transportation** – A medical shuttle will transport personnel for routine medical issues from 8 to 11 a.m. and 3 to 6 p.m. Shuttles will stop at the Welch Theater, Thompson Hall, Wolfe Hall, Building 5022, Shaw House, Muse Manor and the Clinical Research Laboratory.

### In Quotes

*“The most important person on this base right now is the young staff sergeant with a chainsaw in his hands.” Brig. Gen. William Lord, 81st Training Wing commander*

## Name this “operation” contest:

You survived it, you're living it, now name it. Here's your opportunity to name the Hurricane Katrina recovery operation. Submit your name idea to your UCC or the Public Affairs UCC, room 148, Wolfe Hall, or email 81 TRW/PAall. DEADLINE: Sept. 5

**Operation Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Your name \_\_\_\_\_ Shelter \_\_\_\_\_